

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Status of Claims:

Claims 1-8, 10-19, 21 and 22 are currently being canceled (whereby claims 6-8, 10, 11, 17-19, 21 and 22 were withdrawn from consideration as being directed to a non-elected invention, and whereby Applicants reserve the right to prosecute those claims in a divisional application, if desired).

Claims 9 and 20 are currently being amended.

No claims are currently being added.

This amendment cancels and amends claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claims remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After canceling and amending the claims as set forth above, claims 9 and 20 are now pending in this application for examination on the merits.

Indication of Allowable Subject Matter:

Applicants appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter made in the Office Action with respect to claims 9 and 20. By way of this amendment and reply, claims 9 and 20 have each been amended to place those claims in independent form to include the features of their respective base claim and any intervening claims. Thus, claims 9 and 20 are now in allowable form based on the indications made for those claims in the Office Action.

Claim Rejections – Prior Art:

In the Office Action, claims 1-5 and 12-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,694,131 to Lakkis in view of Japanese Laid-Open Patent Publication JP 2000013246A to Katagishi et al. Due to the cancellation of claims 1-5 and 12-16, this rejection is now moot.

Conclusion:

Since all of the issues raised in the Office Action have been addressed in this Amendment and Reply, Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of allowance is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing or a credit card payment form being unsigned, providing incorrect information resulting in a rejected credit card transaction, or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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By 

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